

# ELECTION SPECIAL

MAY 1979

## LABOUR OUT

**WAS IT AN example of British parliamentary democracy grinding on? An opportunity for a grateful electorate to renew the government's mandate for another five years? The first steps towards a new age of Tory prosperity for us all? Or was it, in the words of Frank Maguire, the Independent Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, "an exercise in bullshit"?**

Since the Callaghan government knew that their existence was threatened in the confidence debate which led to their fall on March 28 last, they had been pinning their hope on the small parties in the House and on the so-called independent Members there. When hopes failed, there was much anger expressed by Labour spokesmen against groups like the Scottish Nationalists.

Another Irish MP — Gerry Fitt, who describes himself as a Social Democratic Labour Party member — made some sort of niche for himself in the history of political acrobatics when he declared that, having voted to get Labour out of office, he would then campaign at the election to get them back in again.

No Labour MP seems to have asked why a party which still, on odd occasions, calls itself socialist should have principles so flexible that it can form alliances with parties like the Liberals, Nationalists and the Ulster Unionists. In fact, as the Callaghan government had been remorselessly exposed as a typically impotent capitalists' administration, groping from crisis to crisis, they have relied upon one sordid arrangement after another with the single object of prolonging their miserable hold on office.

It was only as the exposure continued, and the by-election results showed that the voters couldn't wait to turn the Labour Party out, that any alliance with them came to be seen as the kiss of death. There was

then a popular scamper for safety and the Labour government was no more.

For some time, the crisis had been gathering about the government's head. Notably, their so-called pay policy was beginning to look distinctly threadbare, as one group of workers after another became restless under the apparently endless promises of jam tomorrow.

The British capitalist class must be very grateful to Denis Healey, but when his policy provokes strikes by people like civil servants and brings an unheard-of militancy into the hospital workers, then it is obvious that matters are getting out of hand.

While the Stock Exchange has boomed merrily, unemployment has stayed stubbornly around 1½ million. While the ruling class have flaunted their wealth, medical and social services for the working class have been drastically cut back, to the point at which Labour's prized National Health Service was said to be in decay.

The housing problem has remained as persistent a social sore as ever, with inner city areas yielding horrendous stories of destitution, vagrancy and crime — a wasteland of despair.

So it was a miserable, confused, demoralised party which met its end in Parliament on March 28. Not at all like the bouncy optimists who came into power five years ago on promises to control capitalism until it was a land of milk and honey. It has been a measure of Labour's failure to keep their promises, that the voters have turned against them, and that their hold on office has never been secure.

There was no reason for any worker to rejoice at the end of Callaghan's government, since it will be replaced by another which will also administer the capitalist social system, with all that that means for working class misery. Labour or Conservative, the outlook for the working class is one of poverty, exploitation, insecurity.

There is a better way. The working class can turn their back on the sordid politics of capitalism and take their future into their own hands. socialism — a world of freedom and abundance — is there for the asking.

## The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain

### *Tory Enemies*

TELL A LABOUR PARTY supporter that there is no sense in the working class voting for Labour candidates and there is invariably a riposte: "Don't you realise we would then just be letting the Tories in?" This is thought to be an irresistible argument and the opponent cannot bring himself to believe that capitalism is for all practical purposes the same animal whether it is run by Tories or Labour.

The only difference of any consequence is that the Tories don't pretend to be socialists. Though even that distinction requires qualification as it has been known for a Tory politician to announce: "We are all socialists now." And the interesting thing about that is that he may actually believe it. What he is saying is, in a roundabout way, that there is no difference between the parties. He knows that the Labourites call themselves socialist and that in practice they pursue the same policies as his own Tory party. Since it is a safe bet that all politicians are ignorant of what socialism really is then he's entitled to think he can call himself a socialist too. What the Tories should really say, of course, is that "We are all pro-capitalist now, Labour and Tory alike. And always have been."

Any workers who think of

*Either way...*

# IT'S YOUR FUNERAL





## Labour Enemies

IN THIS ELECTION the Labour Party will be defiantly asserting that they are content to be judged on their record. They will say that they have made great strides, during their time in office, in dealing with the social problems of our time. Give them just another spell in power, they will plead, and they will be able to make the crucial breakthrough which will lead to the ending of those problems.

They have been making this claim for a long time. For example in the last election:

... our objective is to bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of the working people and their families. (Labour Party Manifesto, October 1974).

So how have they lived up to their promises? How much weight can be given to their plea now, that they should be allowed another term of office?

Well in the House of Commons on 28 March 1979 Prime Minister Callaghan was declaring that Labour is determined to deal with

... the gaps that still exist in our society, to remove the injustices, class

divisions, and racial bigotry, and to attack the lack of opportunity that still affects many of our citizens.

So after a total of seventeen years of Labour rule since the war, Britain is still a class divided country of injustice, racism and restricted opportunity. It is, in a word, still a capitalist state.

And that is exactly how Labour have run it. Here are some of the policies they have followed:

the imposition of racist immigration laws, some the original work of Tory administrations and some of Labour governments ... an

attack upon working class living standards, by trying to hold down wages while putting up prices through inflating the currency ... opposition to workers on strike for better wages, for example by the use of troops to break the firemen's strike and by actively encouraging workers to breach picket lines ... the maintenance of the full state machine — police, prisons, courts — and all that that means in terms of coercion ... keeping up the British armed forces, with their nuclear weapons, to protect the interests of the British capitalist class ... presiding over a post-war record level of unemployment, persistently around 1½million ... cutting back on hospitals, education, social services and the like

It is no accident that a Labour government should behave in this way, nor that their record should be indistinguishable from that of the Tories. Labour have appealed for votes as a party pledged to reform capitalism out of recognition — and they have always insisted that this is possible — not to abolish it. But reality tells us that capitalism can be run in only one way — in the interests of the minority ruling class and against the interests of the majority. In experience, running capitalism has meant that the Labour Party have had to abandon many of their most cherished reforms. No wonder it is a party riven by dissent and confusion.

To vote for the Labour Party is to vote for capitalism, with all its problems. Again and again, Labour has proved the enemy of the working class.

remember very far back to know that capitalism was exactly the same under Heath as it is under Callaghan. It is true that unemployment was running at only half the rate that it has been under Labour. But you don't have to be a profound student of politics to realise that the ups and downs of capitalism take place quite irrespective of who is running the government.

In the Tory decade of the thirties, the figure was nearly three million. In both Germany and France the current unemployment rate is around the million mark. The former is run by Schmidt, a pseudo-socialist akin to our own dear Labour party while the latter is run by Giscard, a carbon copy of Heath and Macmillan.

Perhaps voters would like to change to the Tories because of the unpleasant winter of discontent we have just come through with many sections of the working class going on strike or threatening to? But although the cynical saying is that a week is a long time in politics, workers can hardly have forgotten that the last winter of Tory government was the occasion for the confrontation with the miners and the three day week.

Can there really be any workers who are so foolish as to imagine that Thatcher can cure the multitude of social evils that afflict them under Callaghan? Even Labour politicians express the notion that this woman is so unlikely a saviour that she is really Labour's best hope of winning the election. If the Tories were led by Joan of Arc, the propertyless condition of the working class would be entirely unaffected. That is the root of all social problems now. And the Tories cannot alter it.



# To Fellow Workers

The Socialist Party of Great Britain is intervening in what has traditionally been, superficially, the Labour-Tory-conflict, where the choice has been between one set of empty political slogans and another. Our candidate in Islington South and Finsbury, Ralph Critchfield, will be representing a genuine Socialist challenge to the capitalist policies of the Labour Government.

Our political opponents think so little of the electorate that they will try to persuade them with catch-all manifestos offering promises which shouldn't fool a child of ten, alongside photographs of their candidates. Saatchi and Saatchi may well be good at selling the packaged policies of the would-be leaders, but like most packaged goods, the contents are not all they're cracked-up to be. For the Socialist Party an election presents a crucial question of power for which serious thought is required. We shall therefore be publishing our manifesto in full in this newspaper so that voters may have a fair opportunity of considering the case against the profit system.

We are not unmindful of the fact that many working class men and women in this area have traditionally given their allegiance to the Labour Party because they consider it to be the party of the working class. We argue that the overriding interest of the working class is to get rid of the system wherein profit is the god and human labour the ritual sacrifice. Labour wants to reform the profit system; we would have it abolished. There are no leaders

# Against the Left

BEWARE OF PARTIES posing as revolutionary socialists which urge workers to vote for another anti-working class Labour Government. Such advice is anti-socialist. For example the April 7 issue of *Socialist Worker*, the paper of the Socialist Workers' Party, in which we were told that

Five years of Labour rule have paved the way for a right-wing Tory Government. Under Wilson and Callaghan Labour has disappointed the hopes of its supporters and brought about a massive swing to the right in British politics.

But the SWP has conveniently neglected to remind its readers who it was that inspired those false hopes. It was *Socialist Worker*, which in the 1974 General Election told its readers that

... a huge Labour vote will strengthen the Unions. It will make it easier for workers to fight back against wage control ... That's why every socialist, every worker must spend all the days before polling day shouting two simple slogans at work, in the home and whenever anyone will listen — DEFEND UNIONS — VOTE LABOUR.

Now, one Grunwick, three pay policies and countless strikes later, workers are beginning to learn the important lesson that there is little to choose between Labour and Tory. They both represent the interest of the wealthy and the privileged. But according to the SWP there is a difference worthy of working class consideration. They claim that

working class'. The obvious conclusion is to vote for neither. Obvious, unless you're in the SWP. They call for

... the rejection of the Tories. In practice that must mean ... returning the Labour Party in this election.

So workers are advised to vote for more Labour-style capitalism under the illusion that 'the effective choice today in national politics is between Callaghan and Thatcher'. We dispute this. The effective choice on May 3 is between capitalism and socialism; between exploitation and freedom. The truth is that the SWP has no conception of that choice. Like the other parties on the Left, they are committed to the reform of the system, not its total destruction.

All the other parties of the Left have urged the voters to vote Labour. The Communist Party, which admires Russia where democratic elections and free trade unions don't exist, states that all that's needed is a Labour government with a left-wing leadership. But capitalism has a great ability to adapt radicalism to its own ends. Witness the Michael Foots, the Tony Benns and the Joan Lestors. Leadership isn't what the working class needs; what is required is mass working class understanding of, and desire for, socialism. The International Marxist Group moronically tells people to vote Labour without illusions — like telling someone to join the army without the fear of being shot.

Not believing the working class to be capable of independent political thought and believing in

# YOUR VOTE MEANS

## WHAT THEY OFFER

FOR the past year a General Election has been expected and you, the voters, have been blasted from every direction by the crude sales tactics of the power-hungry political leaders. The Tories have directly conducted an estimated £1-1½ million campaign to sell their second-hand policies, while the Labour party have enlisted trade union leaders and union funds to convince you, the voters, to accept policies that would be intolerable coming from the Tories. Now that the election is here the political leaders grovel for your vote. THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN's election address is different for three reasons.

1. THE Socialist Party does not ask you to vote for a would-be leader but to consider the merits of a serious idea. While the other parties consider the voters too stupid to do their own thinking, we recognise and depend upon, your ability to understand our case. In fact, the Socialist Party of Great Britain asks you not to vote

for us unless you are convinced by what we say.

2. THE Socialist Party does not speak the same language as our political opponents. They talk about "the balance of payments problem", "the nation", "the good of the economy", "law and order". Theirs is a system in which able workers are thrown on to the scrap-heap when it periodically becomes unprofitable to employ them; in which houses stand empty while homeless families live in misery because they can't afford to pay for a home; in which food is destroyed while millions starve; in which Christian morality is preached while governments store up piles of arms to destroy the world in the quest for markets.

SOCIALISTS speak the language of class struggle; that there is a working class who produce the wealth of society in return for wages or salaries, and a capitalist class who reap the profits simply because they own and control the means of producing and distributing wealth. For socialists,

# ... DON'T WASTE IT





welfare services, and cynical bargaining with the Liberal lobby fodder, racist Enoch Powell and the Ulster Unionists and the flag waving Nationalists (on this occasion the Scottish and Welsh ones and not yet the National Front). A vote for Labour in this election will be to give tacit approval to that record. The only alternative is not the prospect of a Thatcher Government. The Socialist Party does not ask you to vote for an alternative government, but for an alternative to government itself. That will mean saying no to both Labour and Conservative.

The Socialist Party will not be the only organisation to stand in opposition to the two main parties. But we believe that the other minority parties have nothing more to offer the voters than their big brothers. The Communist Party, the heirs of British Stalinism, pedal the wares of State capitalism in the conviction that the tyranny of the State will benefit the working class. That is not Socialism. Some other voters, frustratedly seeking an alternative to the main parties after years of failed reformism, will be conned by the know-nothing nationalism and irrational race hatred of the National Front. Every vote in this election for the continuation of the profit system is a contribution to the inhumane climate in which Fascism festers.

That is why a genuine alternative is needed. The working class is the majority; the bosses are the few. It is time that the working class democratically took the means of wealth production and distribution into our own hands. Only the Socialist Party stands for that objective.

and Thatcher. It is between a conservative Labour government and a triumphant right-wing Tory government . . .

According to the SWP's logic the Labour Government has 'paved the way for a right-wing Tory Government'. And 'A Tory victory would be a defeat for the

benign, the parties of the Left have a fundamental contempt for the democracy of the ballot box. For us, political democracy and Socialism go hand in hand. Our slogan in this election is 'YOUR VOTE MEANS POWER — DON'T WASTE IT ON THE PROFIT SYSTEM'. That's what we call not having illusions.



## Trust Yourself

WILL YOU VOTE for stern great aunt Maggie — who, it is rumoured, has been taking de-elocution lessons to try to get rid of her plummy accent? Or for nice uncle Jim — whose chummy manner has been cultivated for so long that he doesn't need any lessons in it?

Or, if you prefer another sort of image, will you go for clean upper sixth prefect David Steel? He still thinks the Liberal Party have a chance of being the government, one day.

However you make your choice, you will be voting on your preference for one or the other leader. For, in this election as in others, leadership will play a big part; both sides will put their leaders forward as the more sagacious, knowledgeable, experienced, tender hearted . . .

Any voter who wants to support one party because of its leaders, and who thinks about it for a moment, will soon realise that there are some difficult questions to be answered. To begin with, it is obvious that for the majority of people life goes on much the same whatever type of person is at the top in the government.

Think back. Neurotic, sick, irritable Anthony Eden; languid, foppish Harold Macmillan;

aristocratic, fumbling, out-of-his-depth Douglas-Home; wily, lying Harold Wilson; up-tight, disappointed Edward Heath. There has been no lack of variety in personality, ability, style. Yet the problems of our daily life, our prospects, our standing in society — none of these has been changed.

Even more, the leaders themselves have been exposed as unable to deal with the very problems they have set out to get rid of. One proof of that in this election the parties of capitalism are putting forward programmes which claim to be effective against those problems; programmes which, in other words, admit that they still exist.

This apparent impotence often leads workers to the conclusion that it is the particular leader who is at fault. Each leader is accompanied into office by a campaign to unseat him, on the grounds that if he can be got rid of things will be a lot better.

In fact, it is not the leaders who are at fault; to change one for another is an exercise in futility. If anyone can be said to bear the responsibility for the continuance of capitalism's problems it is the people who believe in leadership and who cast their votes on the

basis of their belief.

We are talking, in other words, about you.

Leaders can operate only within the limits of the wishes of their followers. Since those followers have little political awareness, this generally gives the leaders a pretty free hand; they can, and do, take decisions like declaring war, with no reference to the interests of their followers.

Socialists do not accept this. We do not stand as leaders; our candidate in this election is not a leader. We have no leaders in our party. We say that socialism cannot come about by anyone leading us to it.

Our aim is to make socialists — people who have enough political knowledge to see through the deceptions of leadership, who know what capitalism is all about and that socialism is the answer to the problems of modern society. Socialists do not need leaders to get them what they want — they can get it for themselves.

At present, there is one massive snag to all this — there aren't enough of us so we must wait until there are. The appeal of the Socialist Party of Great Britain is to the working class, to think for themselves, to trust themselves and then to act for themselves to bring in the new society of socialism.

## Whose Law? What Order?

WHO'S IN FAVOUR of law and order? Answer: Thatcher, Callaghan, Whitelaw, Rees, Steel. Furthermore, they are all going to give it to you — whether you like it or not. Or are they? Last year Rees said in the House of Commons that crime has risen inexorably, under both Labour and Tory governments, for over 20 years. But he forgot to add that his party (and Thatcher's) had both faithfully sworn to solve this problem once and for all at previous elections.

They didn't solve it. Nor will the next lot. If Thatcher wins, the Tories will consider reintroducing hanging for some crimes. Someone might remind her of the gravity of the criminal problem in earlier centuries when many offences carried the death penalty. Hanging did not solve the problem then. And the problem existed throughout this century when hanging was still quite common for some offences.

The murder of Airey Neave has strengthened the call for hanging. And amid all the talk of Neave's war record, few will remind you that successive British governments that have taken part



# S POWER . . .

the important issue in this election is — Who is to own the means of life; the wealth producers or a minority of rich parasites?

3. THE Socialist Party does not offer you promises of “higher wages” or “more welfare facilities” or “greater security”. The sad but indisputable fact is that as long as you go on supporting capitalism, its problems will be with you. A system which produces even the necessities of life for sale on the market at a profit causes poverty and insecurity for the majority alongside luxury and power for the few.

MANY workers will agree that everything we've said so far is only too true. Yes, the other political parties *are* opportunists; yes, there *is* class inequality; yes, the real problem *is* capitalism. But what's the alternative?

WHAT SOCIALISM IS

THE only alternative is socialism. A society in which the whole community will own the means of

production and distribution of wealth. Class divisions will cease to exist, because instead of the separation between owners and producers of wealth, everyone will own and produce in common. Authoritarian leadership will give way to genuine democracy in which people will really have a say, because no longer will a minority possess power and privilege. Production for profit will be replaced by production for human needs, whereby goods will be freely available for people to take according to their needs. Work will be carried out on the basis of free co-operation instead of the coercion of the wages system. The division of nations will give way to the unity of one world. Inequality based upon possessions, status, race or sex will vanish as human beings create, for the first time ever, a sane society geared to the fulfillment of human needs.

Critics of socialism claim that given free access, people will act irresponsibly. This we dispute. It is perfectly possible for people to act sociably when a socialist majority puts an end to the rat-race.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN is the only party in this election to stand unequivocally for socialism — although there are others who pay lip service to the idea. Labour says that Nationalisation is Socialism, but state intervention is just another way of managing capitalism. The Communist Party says that Russia is socialist, when it's simply a state-capitalist dictatorship of one party. There are even some trade union leaders who say that socialism means “responsible wage restraint” when in fact it means the abolition of the wages system.

FOR the working class, the vast majority of the population, socialism is the only alternative to the chaos of the profit system.

YOUR VOTE MEANS POWER . . . ARE YOU PREPARED TO GIVE IT ONCE AGAIN TO ONE OF THE PARTIES OF CAPITALISM . . . OR WILL YOU JOIN US IN TRANSFORMING THE SOCIALIST IDEA INTO REALITY?

# ON THE PROFIT SYSTEM

in the horrendous civil war in Northern Ireland as a result of which Neave was murdered. These problems were undoubtedly contributed to by Neave (and those like him) with his firm insistence that the British Army of Occupation in Ulster should remain to protect British investments. Anyway, you might remember that to-days “terrorist” is tomorrow's

## Socialism Against Racism

IT WAS IN 1964 that race re-emerged as an election issue in Britain. Since then, in certain constituencies, it has cropped up again and again, usually in the form of a candidate's

racism — like Enoch Powell's — is compounded of malice and confusion.

Those who advocate “smashing” racism ignore the fact

## ADVERTISEMENT

DO YOU OWN LESS WEALTH THAN YOU NEED TO KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE FROM WEEK TO WEEK? Hungry? In need of shelter? Unable to keep your body warm? Well here's news of a group you can't afford not to be in — THE WORKING CLASS.

Yes, for just eight hours a day, forty eight weeks a year for all your active adult life, you can become a member of the world's fastest growing class. And what's more, WE PAY YOU FOR YOUR LABOUR POWER!

This is how it works. You come to one of our thousands of employers — the technical term is capitalists, but don't worry about that — and he gives you a JOB. From then on you make goods for us — commodities — and we sell them to people with money to buy them. In return you get WAGES — or, if you work hard and buy a suit we give you SALARIES! You can spend your wages or salaries on anything you need with ONE SIMPLE CONDITION — you have to buy

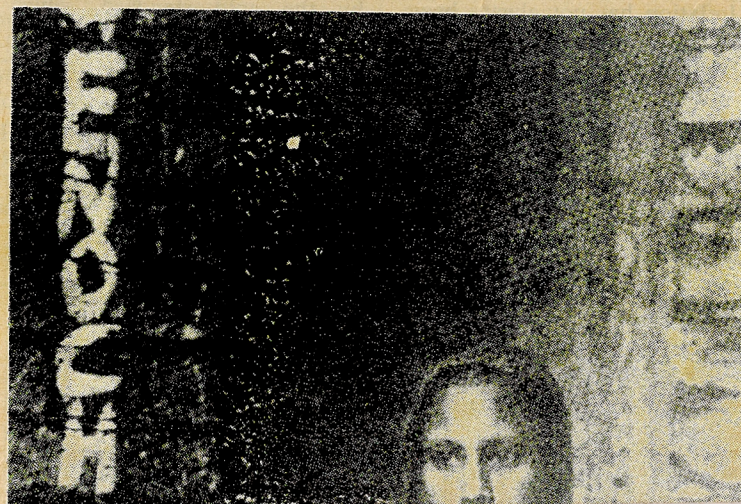
cheap to stay alive.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR US? Nothing at all. We employ you because we want to use our superior brain power to help the less fortunate majority keep alive. As an added bonus we take the PROFITS from your surplus labour in order to maintain our standard of living.

As a WORKER you get plenty of facilities. Cheap HOLIDAYS on crowded beaches in specially allocated resorts, jolly entertainments on the TELEVISION and RADIO to keep you happy for the day ahead, and free PUBLIC HOUSES where you can drown your sorrows while boosting our profits.

Life in the working class is FUN, HARD WORK and VERY REWARDING. We need YOU to help us to help you!

And one final thing. WE'RE DEMOCRATIC! That's right! Every five years we give you the right to elect our representatives into power again!





statesman. The classic example is Menachim Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister — once a terrorist, now a Nobel Peace Prize Winner. Next year perhaps an IRA gunman for the Nobel Prize? Over Neave's dead body, as it were.

The reason crime is such a part of the everyday scene is not hard to find. Capitalism of any kind is a callous society. Profit is the prime cause of economic endeavour. People's needs are second, profitability first. So in the name of profit anything may go, including mass murder. The IRA with their senseless killings are small fry compared with the British government of which Neave wished to become a part.

British governments have enough ammunition ready to murder the whole population of Ireland, North and South. When necessary they use their mass means of destruction. Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Dresden; these are names that even those brought up long after the events will know. And worse; compared to the Russian, American, and Chinese capacity for world wide destruction, British capitalism is only small fry.

A vote for capitalism, is a vote for a society that produces horrors in abundance; crime is only one. You can't have it both ways — either capitalism and crime or socialism and a free society without the causes of crime — poverty, insecurity and the mad pursuit of the individual at the expense of the community. Disorder is capitalism's order of the day. That is what the parties of capitalism stand for. Where do you stand?

form of a candidate from the National Front.

Now the NF, who openly proclaim their racialism, are intending to put up enough candidates to gain them some time on television. All of this has given the impression that racism is on the increase and that the NF represent a threat which has to be taken seriously.

One response to this has come from the 'left wing' organisations who say they will "Smash the Fascists"; one member of an organisation called Miners Against the Nazis put it: 'If we're going to beat the NF, it is out there on the streets that we have to do it.' (*Socialist Worker* 3.3.79).

Another response is to try to prevent the NF putting their views across by other means, for example by campaigning against local councils allowing them to hire halls for meetings.

These policies have an emotive appeal but in fact are futile, even dangerous. To encourage a government to ban one party is to give them the power to ban others as well. There is no evidence that to try to suppress an idea stops it growing — as the Nazis found out in Germany before the war. Ideas — and this probably applies with especial force to racism — are not changed by violence; more likely they are reinforced.

But being in favour of the NF, or any other organisation, having their say does not imply any support for their ideas. Racism is a dangerous fallacy and no member of the working class should entertain it for a moment.

There is no scientific evidence that differences in skin colour or other physical characteristics lead to unequal abilities. Most of the "evidence" offered in support of

that it arises directly out of the pressures of capitalist society. The working class are under an unrelenting burden of poverty, illness and insecurity. It needs only a crisis of some sort for their problems to be highlighted — and for them to react in an illogical way.

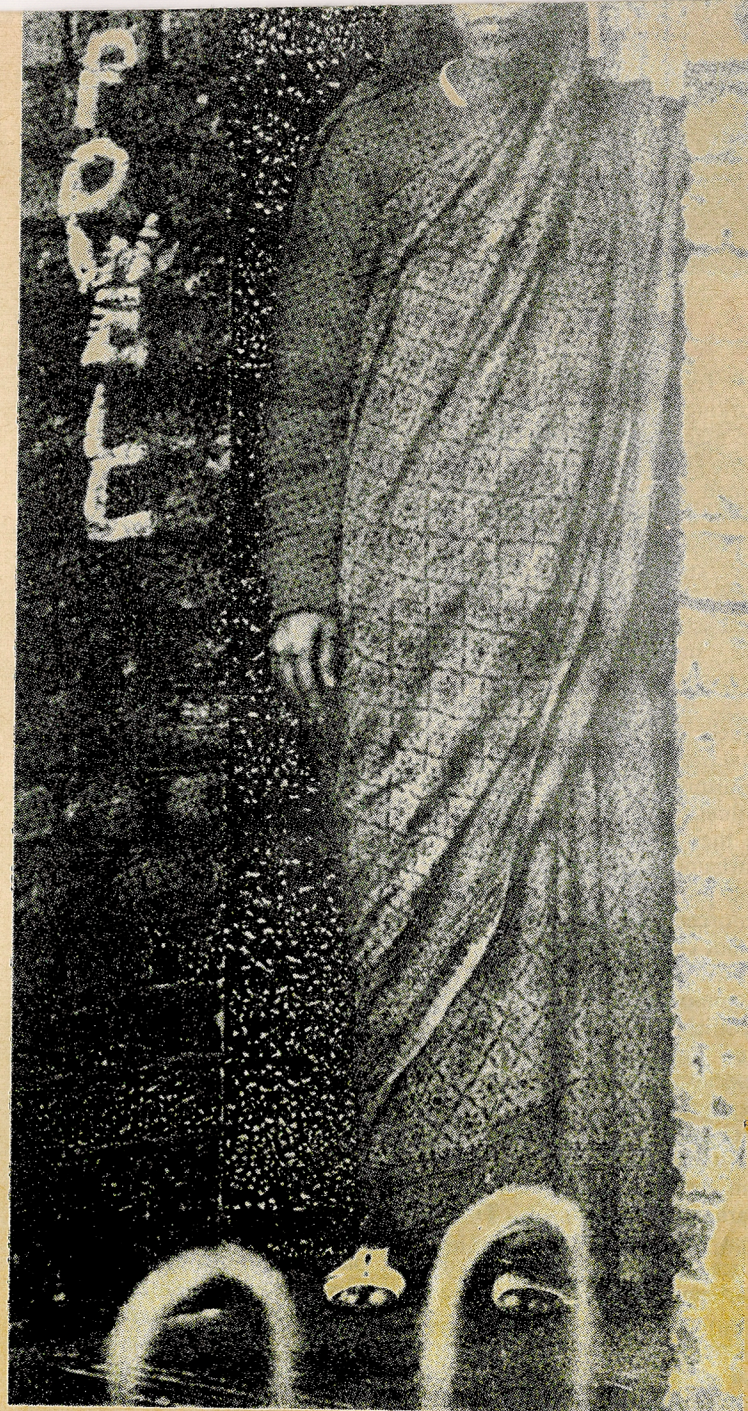
Large scale immigration is such a crisis. It highlights working class, housing difficulties, a shortage of jobs, a lack of adequate social services. Immigrants do not cause the problems; for example there are relatively few coloured immigrants in Glasgow but that is a city with some of the worst slums and with the most acute social problems like crime.

Racism is opposed to the unity of the working class. The basic division in society today, a division which cuts across skin colour and so-called race, is that between capitalist and worker. The interests of the capitalists are the same — to keep capitalism in being and to maintain their privileged position in society, which means keeping the working class in subjection.

On the other hand the interests of the working class are to overthrow the capitalist social system, with its privilege and its poverty, and to replace it with socialism. Every worker has an interest in socialism, whether "black" or "white" or whatever.

Socialism, then, appeals to the working class to unite for the overthrow of capitalism and to replace it with a world in which all human beings will stand in equality. Racism and nationalism are divisive ideas, which seek to split the working class.

The ideas of racism can most effectively be opposed by a better idea — and the idea of socialism is the best there is.





# Straight Talk on inflation and Unemployment

THE LABOUR PARTY, the Tories and the Liberals all agree that it is the workers who are responsible for inflation, because it is wage increases that push up prices. Most workers also believe this falsehood. Responsibility for inflation rests with the government and nobody else. The price level now is twelve times what it was in 1938 because of the policy operated by successive governments — Labour and Tory.

A recent example shows the falsity of the Labour-Tory-Liberal explanation of inflation. They say that the workers get higher wages, buy more goods in the shops and thus raise prices. But the government's own index measuring the rise of the earnings of all workers, and their index of the rise of prices, showed that between January 1975 and January 1978 average earnings rose by 48 per cent but prices rose by 58 per cent. The workers were not buying more goods but less; their take home pay was not even keeping up with the cost of living.

Inflation has not always been with us. For nearly a century

before 1914 governments operated a policy which prevented inflation. The price level in 1914 was almost exactly the same as it was in 1850, but over the whole period 1850-1914 the rise of average wages was estimated to be 90 per cent. So much for the modern theory which blames price rises on wage increases.

This does not mean that capitalism without inflation is better for the workers than capitalism with inflation. As production increased the workers, through continuous hard fought battles, were able in the 19th century to increase "real wages" (what take-home pay will buy). Compared with 1938 the "real wages" of most workers have similarly increased. The difference is that, with inflation, nine-tenths of many wage increases are illusory, swallowed up in higher prices.

The way governments cause inflation is by putting into circulation an excess amount of currency (notes and coin). It was prevented in 19th century Britain by the gold standard, which linked Bank of England notes to

gold. By law, the notes were convertible on demand into gold, at a fixed rate (£1 represented about 1/4 ounce of gold). At a given level of production, a certain amount of gold linked currency is needed; if it is replaced by inconvertible paper currency of a larger amount, prices rise correspondingly. Whenever and wherever such excess issue has taken place inflation has resulted.

Continuously since 1938 there has been an excess issue of currency (far beyond any increase needed), so that the total in circulation has risen from under £500 million in 1938 to about £8,500 million today. In the past year the Bank of England has printed and put into circulation £1,000 million of additional notes.

The reason British (and other) governments have gone in for inflation is partly because it suits the interest of some sections of the capitalist class, but predominantly because they were persuaded that by changing their policy they could reduce unemployment to very low levels and could avoid trade

depressions. The Labour Party believed that by "giving people more money to spend" they could wipe out unemployment completely.

Faced with the onset of the present depression, with unemployment at a high level (it reached 1,600,000 in 1977), some economists and Tory politicians now want to revert to the 19th century policy for running capitalism.

If they have their way and curb, or even halt, inflation it will not solve the workers' problems. It will not abolish unemployment — there was always unemployment in the 19th century. Nor will it save capitalism from sinking into periodical depressions which governments are completely powerless to prevent: the longest of all capitalism's series of depressions was late in the 19th century when there was no inflation.

It is not in the interest of the working class to support capitalism whether the government is Tory or Labour, with inflation or without inflation: their interest is to replace capitalism with socialism.

## SOCIALIST PARTY

OF GT. BRITAIN

### OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

### DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GT. BRITAIN holds:

1] That Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2] That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.

3] That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4] That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

5] That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6] That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working

## Socialism — Yes

THE PRODUCTIVE APPARATUS now available is capable of supplying an abundance of goods and services to satisfy human needs. This is an established technological fact. In other words, the problem of production has now been solved. Scarcity has been conquered. Yet most people still suffer in varying degrees from scarcity. This contradiction is to be explained by the fact that

No profits would be made and so no money would be gained, either to maintain those who live off profits or to re-invest in production.

Quite simply, abundance would kill profits. This is why those in charge of capitalism must do all they can to prevent it. They must maintain an artificial scarcity in order to preserve





# Your Vote

TO ESTABLISH SOCIALISM the working class must gain control of the machinery of government. It is the government which runs the armed forces, which would be used against any attempt to establish socialism that by-passed the state machine. Without control of the government, a socialist working class would be at the mercy of pro-capitalist diehards.

In Britain it is Parliament which is at the centre of governmental power. Single-issue reformist bodies attempt to influence Parliament to legislate in their particular area. Acts of Parliament lay down new laws and provide the means for their enforcement. Parliament's status is not crucially affected by either British membership of the Common Market or the proposed Scottish or Welsh assemblies. It is true that ministers can issue Special Orders giving their decisions force of law, without their being debated in Parliament, but they can only do this because their party has a parliamentary majority. The fact that some statutes come into force without being referred to Parliament does not invalidate the argument that all laws ultimately depend on Parliament for their validity and enforcement.

So gaining control of the machinery of government means essentially gaining control of Parliament. And in Britain there is a simple enough way to do this — the vote. Voters so far have without exception elected pro-capitalists MPs and so governments to administer capitalism, but since the overwhelming majority of voters are members of the working class, a socialist working class will have no difficulty in electing a majority of socialist delegates to Parliament. It will not be a question of electing leaders who are expected to solve our problems for us, but of sending to Parliament delegates who have been instructed how to act by workers who understand and desire socialism. With socialist delegates in Parliament and the mass of workers embracing socialism, no power on earth will be able to prevent the establishment of socialist society.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain, then, rejects both the anti-parliamentarianism of anarchists and left wingers, and the strategy of using Parliament for reformist ends. Instead we stress the importance of capturing Parliament for revolutionary purposes. As long as we are a small organization, and are handicapped by the requirement of a deposit and of ten signatures on the nomination form, we shall be unable to field enough

distributed is still geared to a by-gone age of scarcity. The wages-prices-profits system which is capitalism no longer corresponds to the technological possibilities.

The aim of production under capitalism is not to satisfy human needs but to make a profit. "No profit, no production" is the basic economic rule today. This is why production stops at a point well before human needs have been fully satisfied. If, under the present system, the productive apparatus were to be used to its full potential, prices would fall.

candidates actually to challenge for control of Parliament. So for the time being our electoral activities have largely propagandist value. But they also express our insistence on the necessity of capturing control of Parliament and thereby of the state machine before socialism can be introduced.

In this election a socialist candidate will be standing in the Islington South and Finsbury constituency in London. He will not be seeking voters' support by kissing babies or making fancy promises; instead he will be stressing the need for you to consider the case for socialism and not to vote socialist unless you are convinced of the validity of our case. If you live elsewhere you can register your vote against capitalism and for socialism by writing "SOCIALISM — SPGB" across your ballot paper. This does not waste your vote, in fact quite the contrary: the real wasted votes are those used to elect a capitalist politician and thus ensure the continuance of poverty and exploitation for the working class.

Instead of throwing your vote away, you can use it to good effect — by voting for socialism.

always successful, especially in the domain of agriculture, and then the solution is to destroy the abundance: to pour milk down disused mines, to plough back vegetables into the ground, to let fruit rot on the trees. The problem of poverty amidst plenty is solved by eliminating the plenty rather than by distributing it to those who need it!

Besides being a system of artificial scarcity capitalism is also one of organised waste. Goods are made not to last too long so as to maintain sales and profits. The world's resources are plundered and the environment polluted in the search for quick profits. Then there are armaments . . .

If production is today organised on an absurd basis so too is consumption. Here the basic rule is "no money, no consumption". If you don't have money your needs will not be satisfied however urgent they may be. But the source of money for most people is the wages they are paid for the sale of their mental and physical energies to an employer. Wages are a price and, like all prices, are determined by the cost of production; in this case the cost of the goods and services required by workers to keep themselves fit to work.

Under capitalism the consumption of the great majority of people is restricted to this level. It is effectively rationed by their wage packet or salary cheque and so they do not constitute a market for the abundance of goods and services that could be produced. This situation is built-in to capitalism and its wages-prices-profits system where the purchasing power of most people is tied to the sale of their ability to work.

The present capitalist system is irrational and does not serve human needs. It ought therefore to be abolished and replaced by a system organised on a completely different basis: the means for producing and distributing wealth

the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7] That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8] The SOCIALIST PARTY OF GT. BRITAIN, therefore, enters the field of political action, determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

should become the common heritage of all under democratic control. On this basis the potential abundance of modern industry could be realised and human needs fully satisfied. It would then simply be a question of assessing these needs and planning production and distribution to meet them. The exchange economy disappears and with it money, prices, wages and profits and is replaced by production and distribution solely and directly to satisfy human needs.

Everybody helps in the work of producing the abundance to which they then have free access according to individual need. The socialist principle "from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs" is put into operation. This, and only this, is socialism, the sole objective of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and its companion parties and groups in other parts of the world.